

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SUVA 01054 01 OF 02 060316Z

ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 NEA-10 DHA-05 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01

TRSE-00 IO-13 /100 W

-----108950 060322Z /61

R 052300Z SEP 77

FM AMEMBASSY SUVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6434

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 SUVA 1054

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, FJ

SUBJECT: SECOND GENERAL ELECTION NEARS

REF: SUVA 0689

1. RULING ALLIANCE, TWO FEUDING FACTIONS OF OPPOSITION NATIONAL FEDERATION PARTY (NFP) AND EXTREMIST ETHNIC FIJIAN NATIONALIST PARTY (FNP) HAVE ALL ANNOUNCED AND ARE CAMPAIGNING ON PLATFORMS THEY HOPE WILL BRING VICTORY IN SECOND GENERAL ELECTION OF YEAR SEPTEMBER 17. POLLS CLOSE SEPTEMBER 24TH.

2. ALTHOUGH INDIAN NFP MANAGED SHOW OF ELEVENTH HOUR UNITY FOR APRIL ELECTIONS, OLD ANIMOSITIES RESURFACED AFTER WINNING PARTY HESITATED TO FORM GOVT. AND GOVERNOR GENERAL REINSTATED PRIMEMIN RATU MARA AS HEAD OF MINORITY ALLIANCE GOVT. HAVING FLUBBED CHANCE PROVIDED BY FNP'S SIPHONING OF FIJIAN VOTES FROM ALLIANCE, LEADER-
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PAGE 02 SUVA 01054 01 OF 02 060316Z

SHIP STRUGGLE BECAME SO HEATED THAT NFP SPLIT NOW OFFICIAL AND PARTY FACING ELECTIONS WITH TWO SLATES OF CANDIDATES. ONE HEADED BY PARLIAMENT OPPOSITION LEADER SIDDIQ KOYA, THE OTHER BY PARTY PRES. IRENE NARAYAN AND GENERAL SEC. K.C. RAMRAKHA. NFP'S APPARENT DEATH-WISH HAS CONTRIBUTED TO IMPROVED ALLIANCE PROSPCTS.

3. NFP FACTIONAL PLATFORMS DIRECTED MOST BITING WORDS AT EACH

OTHER AND SOME OF HARDEST CAMPAIGNING HAS BEEN AIMED AT PROVING WHICH IS "REAL" NFP. BOTH PROMISED BETTER DEAL FOR MOSTLY INDIAN CANE FARMERS, BOTH CALLED FOR IMPROVED SOCIAL SERVICES, BOTH CHARGED GOVT IN OWN WAY WITH HAVING FAILED CREATE STABLE MULTI-RACIAL SOCIETY. KOYA FACTION MUCH THE HARDER ON ALLIANCE, ACCUSING GOF OF MISHANDLING RECENT DOCK STRIKE AND WARNING THAT ALLIANCE LANDSLIDE COULD RESULT IN AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION TO DEPRIVE INDIANS OF CITIZENSHIP. ALTHOUGH CONSTITUTION PROVIDES FOR GOVERNOR GENERAL OF ANY RACE, KOYA, STILL SMARTING FROM APRIL REJECTION BY GOVGEN HE (RIGHTLY) SUSPECTS OF ANTI-INDIAN BIAS, CALLED FOR ROTATION OF POSITION AMONG RACES.

4. ALLIANCE LEADER, PRIMEMIN RATU MARA, SNAPPED BACK STRONGLY AT KOYA, NAILED HIS WARNING ON INDIAN CITIZENSHIP AS "BLATANT LIE" AND CORRECTLY POINTED OUT VICTORY OF THOSE PROPORTIONS COULD ONLY OCCUR IF ALLIANCE ABLE ELECT MANY MORE INDIANS MEMBERS. PRIMEMIN WENT ON TO DEFEND ALLIANCE RACIAL RECORD, ASSERTED WITH SOME ACCURACY THAT GOVT. DEFEATED LAST APRIL PRECISELY BECAUSE OF ITS MULTIRACIAL POLICY. HE HIT AT FNP ETHNIC CRANKS, DECLARING "CHRISTIANITY AND COMMONSENSE FORBID EXPLUSION OF INDIANS, "NOT TO SPEAK OF CONSITTUTION". AT SAME TIME HE CALMED CHAUVINISTIC FIJIAN FEARS, REMINDING FIJIAN OF SPECIAL CONSITTUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS OF THEIR CUSTOMS AND LAND OWNERSHIP.

5. MARA FORCEFULLY JUSTIFIED GOF'S REGIROUS HANDLING OF DOCK STRIKE, LABELLED UNREST - NOT FOR FIRST TIME - AS POLITICALLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 SUVA 01054 01 OF 02 060316Z

INSPIRED DRIVE TO EMBARRASS GOVT BEFORE ELECTIONS, AND UNDERLINED THAT 11,000 HAVE WON WAGE INCREASES WITHIN 10 PERCENT GUIDELINES SET BY AGREEMENT BETWEEN GOF, LABOR AND BUSINESS. PRIMEMIN RAN DOWN LIST OF GOF PROJECTS BENEFITING POOR, DEFENDED BUSINESS AS PROVIDING INVESTMENT, JOBS, EXPERTISE, AND TAX REVENUE. "RICH SHOULD PAY MOST, POOR RECEIVE MOST. IN YOUNG NATION, WE ALL IN IT TOGETHER. WE HAVE ENOUGH DIFFICULTIES WITHOUT IMPORTING CLASS WAR," HE CONCLUDED. PRIMEMIN APPEAL WAS VINTAGE MARA, THOUGH A TOUCH OVERLY DEFENSIVE.

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PAGE 01 SUVA 01054 02 OF 02 060235Z
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 SUVA 1054

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

6. TROUBLED AND TROUBLESOME FNP, ITS LEADING DEMAGOGUE, BUTADROKA, IN PROSION AND DOCK LEADER VEITATA CAMPAIGNING FROM CELL, ISSUED ODDLY MUTED CALL TO SUPPORTERS. PARTY PRESIDENT, RATU MOSESE TUISAVAU, AVOIDED ALL MENTION OF JAILED COMRADES AND MADE NO REFERENCE TO "FIJI FOR THE FIJIAN" BATTLE CRY WHICH DREW VOTES FROM ALLIANCE AND HELPED UNITED INDIANS LAST APRIL. "RATU MO", HIMSELF UNABLE CAMPAIGN FOR SEAT SINCE DECLARED A BANKRUPT, CALLED FOR SUGAR PRICE STABILIZATION THEME, LOCAL PROCESSING OF COPRA PRODUCTS, A "THINK TANK" FOR PARLIAENT, MEASURES TO LIIMIT URBAN DRIFT,(15-CENT BREAD, AN AUNTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION AND (LOW BLOW) A PLAN TO SUBSIDIZE LOW BUS FARES BY OBLIGING DIPLOMATS TO PAY CUSTOMS DUTY.

7. ASKED ABOUT ABSENSE OF RACIAL RHETORIC, RATU MO COOLLY RESPONDED EXPLUSION OF INDIANS NOT NFP POLICY BUT PERSONAL VIEW OF BUTADROKA HOWEVER, PARTY WANTTS CONSITITUTIONAL REVISIONS STRENGTHENING SAFEGUARDS FOR ETHNIC FIJIAN RIGHTS, AND RESERVING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 SUVA 01054 02 OF 02 060235Z

POSITIONS OF GOVGEN AND PRIME MIN FOR FIJIAN. SURPRISING REPUDIATIONOF BUTADROKA'S EXTREME RACIAL POSITION WOULD SEEN UNDERCUT FNP'S MAIN APPEAL, THOUGH INDIVIUDUAL CANDIDATES CONTINUE PUSH LINE IN RURAL AREAS.

8. ALLIANCE IS CONDUCTING MORE VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN WHAT BEFORE AND IS STRIVING AGAINST OVER-CONFIKDENCE WHICH LED TO SURPRISE UPSET IN APRIL. CANDIDATES ARE SEEN IN CONSTITUENCIES MORE OFTEN AND FIVE, INCLUDING RATU MARA, HAVE RETURNED UNOPPOSED TO SEATS. THERE REMAIN SIGNS, HOWEVER, THAT GOVT IS TAKING TOO MUCCH COMFORT IN NFP DISARRAY AND THAT SOME ALLIANCE CANDIDATES CONTINUE TO SHUM COMMO
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TOUCH ATTRIBUTED TO EARTHIER FNP ASPIRANTS. ALLIANCE STRATEGY, AND BEST QOPPORTUNITY, IS TO CONCENETRATE ON FIJIAN WHO DESERTED TO FNP OR FAILED TO VOTE. EVEN LEADER OF INDIAN PARTNER IN ALLIANCE HAS ADMITTED TO ME THAT NFP, THOUGH SPLIT, WILL CONTINUE DRAW MOST INDIAN VOTES THOUGH HE EXPECTS BETTER INDIAN ALLIANCE SHOWING THAN BEFORE.

9. WE SEE OUTCOME OF SEPT 17 ELECTIONS AS HOLDING FEW IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. INTERESTS HERE. SHOULD NFP AGAIN BE VICTORIOUS, LEADERSHIP WOULD BE STATESMANLIKE THAN UNDER RATU MARA, A WORLD FIGURE, BUT WE WOULD EXPECT LITTLE CHANGE IN MODERATE, LARGELY PRO-WESTERN POLICIES OF MARA GOVT. IF NARAYAN-REMRAKHA FACTION WERE TO HAVE UPPER HAND IN UNITED NFP GOVT. KOYA PERHAPS LESS PREDICTABLE, MORE DEMAGOGIC, WOULD BE HARDER DEAL WITH, THOUGH HE IS WEALTHY LAWYER AND HARDLY A RADICIAL. HIS SOVIET-TAINTED ASSOCIATE APISAI TORA, A LEADER OF NFP FIJIAN WING, WOULD PROBABLY DEMAND AND MIGHT RECEIVE CABINET POST IN WHICH HE WOULD URGE POSITIONS INIMICABLE TO U.S. HIS INFLUENCE, HOWEVER, IS LIMIED BY WELL-KNOWN PARANOIA AND INSTABILITY.

10. CAPAIGN SO FAR SUPPORTS VIEW THAT ALLIANCE MAY WELL WIN THIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 SUVA 01054 02 OF 02 060235Z

TIME AROUND, THOUGH ITS MAJORITY IS LIKELY TO BE REDUCED FROM COMFORTABLE MARGIN IT HELD BEFORE LAST SPRING'S TRAUMA. AS K.C. REMRAKHA RECENTLY NOTED, BLIND SUPPORT OF GOVT. HAS WANKED, ALLIANCE HAS BEEN (SOMEWHAT) OUT OF TOUCH, ELECTORATE IS MORE DEMANDING.

11.ABOVE REPORT PREPARED BY CHARGE PRIOR TO TDY IN TONGA.
HASLTON

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